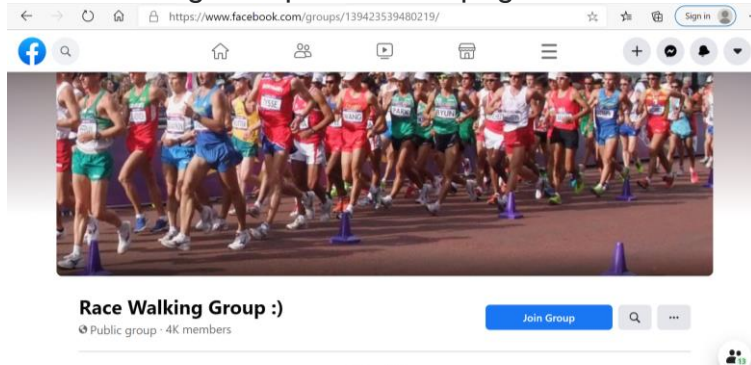


Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

VIRTUAL RACE WALKING LEAGUE

Over the past 4 months walkers across the world have been participating in a virtual 2K race walking league, submitting their times for publication each week on the Race Walking Group Facebook page.



The league is getting smaller as other countries start real racing again, and clubs are reopening for training across the UK, with races now having taken place in Guernsey and the Isle of Man. Despite this, the league continues and walkers are encouraged to participate.

Southend-on-Sea AC 1 mile VIRTUAL EVENT

The league organisers have kindly agreed to record 1 mile times for a virtual race, in lieu of the traditional Southend event held on the August Bank Holiday. In fact, you can do 2 virtual races at the same time – the established 2 km and the Southend AC 1 mile!

Complete the distances between 29 August and 2 September, and submit your time/s to

ellekerhelen@yahoo.co.uk

With thanks to the Virtual Race Walking league organisers for their support.

YOUR FULL SUPPORT REQUESTED

Over the decades our Essex race walking scene has sadly waned considerably. One bright spark in a sea of gloom has been the annual Southend-on-Sea AC 1 Mile at an excellent Garon Park Track on August Bank Holiday Monday. This race has enjoyed good support, with over 20 on a couple of occasions. Since June Cork's initiative in igniting this event, 23 has been our best turnout. Fields has seen turnouts from those with Olympian status to beginners. Yes folks - new names! Every year, star names present many awards - remember when David Moorcroft did the honours? As well as the first 3 men and women there are age category awards and - of course - the George Woods Trophy (kindly donated by the talented O'Rawe family) in memory of a great Southend Centurion stalwart of decades' past. This is presented to the first Essex resident Centurion.

You can't have your event this August for obvious reasons. However, thanks to an imaginative initiative suggested by Centurion duo Tony Perkins and Alan O'Rawe we can all support this popular fixture by staging a Virtual Southend-on-Sea AC 1 Mile race - so please go for it.



ANY TAKERS FOR HIGH OFFICE?

England Athletics have 2 elected Directors: Nick Costello (Cambridge & Coleridge AC) who is up for re-election at this year's AGM (to be held provisionally on Saturday 10 October) and Tim Souter (Blackheath & Bromley Harriers AC) who comes up for re-election at their 2021 AGM. Details of this position, what's required and how to apply are on: [England Athletics Board Elected Director election process goes live - About Us](#)

BACK IN 1955

On its front page, [December's "Race Walking Record"](#) reminds readers of qualifying standards for our 1956 Olympic Games selection: 20k/1 hour 38 minutes and 50k/4 hours 35 minutes. Readers are informed which race walkers had already achieved these marks. At 20k these were: G W Coleman, R L Hardy, B Hawkins and A H Poole. At 50k they were A Johnson and D J Thompson. It's a real uphill task to qualify nowadays! There were huge turnouts at the Belgrave Harriers (200 starters) 7 miles-and-a-bit won by Alf Poole of Worcester AC in 54.10 and for Enfield's Open 7 Miles (157 starters) won by Bryan Hawkins of Metropolitan WC in 53.19. An interesting observation is that future 1960 Olympic 20k bronze medallist Stan Vickers was making his way through the ranks and was one of **many** appearing in both races, clocking 57.11 (16th) at the Bels and 60.01 (35th) at Enfield. In those days the handicap was important - both Individual and team. There were 6 valuable individual prizes at Enfield, claimed (in order) by Ron Purkiss (Eastleigh AC & RAF), Colin Williams (Ilford), C Field (Highgate H), John Moran (St Albans City AC), R Bygrave (Highgate H) and Norman Alderman (Ilford).

NEW SERIES No. 85 (165) DECEMBER, 1955

THE NATIONAL PAPER FOR RACE WALKERS
• Published Monthly

Race Walking RECORD

OLYMPIC STANDARDS

It is expected that the names of athletes selected for the Olympic Games at Melbourne next November will be announced early in August, and form in any one particular event will not be the deciding factor this time. To act as a guide the British Amateur Athletic Board have issued a list of standard times. Only those who can equal or beat these times will come under consideration. The walking standards are:

50 km.—4 hrs. 35 mins.
20 km.—1 hr. 38 mins.

The following walkers have been named as having equalled these times in the past year:

50 km.: A. Johnson, D. J. Thompson.
20 km.: G. W. Coleman, B. Hawkins, R. L. Hardy, A. H. Poole.

It is certain however, that in view of the small number of athletes going, not more than four at the outside, and perhaps only two, walkers will be selected. The total number of the party has been estimated at as low as 24 men and 10 women athletes. The funds in hand at the time of selection will have a bearing on the final numbers.

The period of the Games at Melbourne is Nov. 22nd—Dec. 8th, 1956.

SWEDES AGAIN FOR 50 KILOMETRES

The National Senior Championships programme for 1956 is:

10 Miles—Regents Park, London, March 10th.
20 Miles—Northern Ave., May 12th.
50 Kilometres—Enfield, Middx., June 16th.

The R.W.A. General Hon. Secretary, Mr. L. W. Woodcock, has been advised that the Swedes would like to send three or four of their best men again for our 50 km Championship. They competed at Sheffield in 1953, when John Ljunggren won from Albert Johnson, and again at Coventry last year when the Soderlund brothers were 3rd and 4th to Albert Johnson and Don Thompson, 1st and 2nd respectively.

COMING EVENTS
(Southern Area)

Essex Harriers continue their efforts on behalf of the younger walkers by again promoting their Youth and Junior Meeting at Chigwell Row, Essex. The programme of events to take place on January 7th is:

Open Youth and Junior 3½ miles
Boys' 1½ miles
all to start at 3 p.m.

This time medals will also be given if the respective Junior, Youth and Boys' course records are broken. The scratch team race covers both Youths and Juniors, 5 to 8 men. The fees are very modest: Youth and Junior 1/-; Boys 6d, Team 2/-, and entries close to PHIL EVERARD on December 30th.

Published by the Race Walking Association for subscription only, 5s. 3d. for six months, 10/- for 12 months. Articles, letters, results and other correspondence to the Hon. Editor, A. D. McIlvenney, 52 Manor View, S.W. Subscriptions, etc., to the printer and distributor, G. Swan, 17 Chapel Street, London, S.W.4.

"GET WELL SOON"

Word has spread across the ocean that Geoff Hunwicks is suffering with pneumonia. Oh dear! We're so sorry to hear this - and, needless to say, we hope the Gambian Health service will cope well with their latest patient. Over many years Geoff was a key player on our Essex athletics scene, being a Junior International and on a number of occasions, a County Champion and National team gold medallist. In the '70s he came within a whisker of earning a full GB vest at a sensational trial race around the old infamous Basildon 50K course, when just pipped by Barry Ingarfield for 3rd place. On behalf of Geoff's many friends we indeed hope his setback will be short and he'll soon be back on his feet.

BRIAN ASHWELL RIP

The death, at the age of 87, has been reported of Brian Ashwell, who in the colours of Leicester Walking Club became Centurion 926 when completing the 1994 Leicester 100 Miles in 20:31.54. It was the last occasion a 100 miles' race was staged on the testing Hungarton course. Centurions' Honorary Treasurer Richard Cole (who qualified the same day) recalls Brian saying that he did not feel tired. Richard said that he could walk forever with his energy. Brian was better known as a runner and as an active member of Leicester-based West End Runners' Club. His record shows him to have competed in Essex, including the 1996 Colchester 100 miles. His partner predeceased him. Condolence is expressed.

RECOMMENDED READING

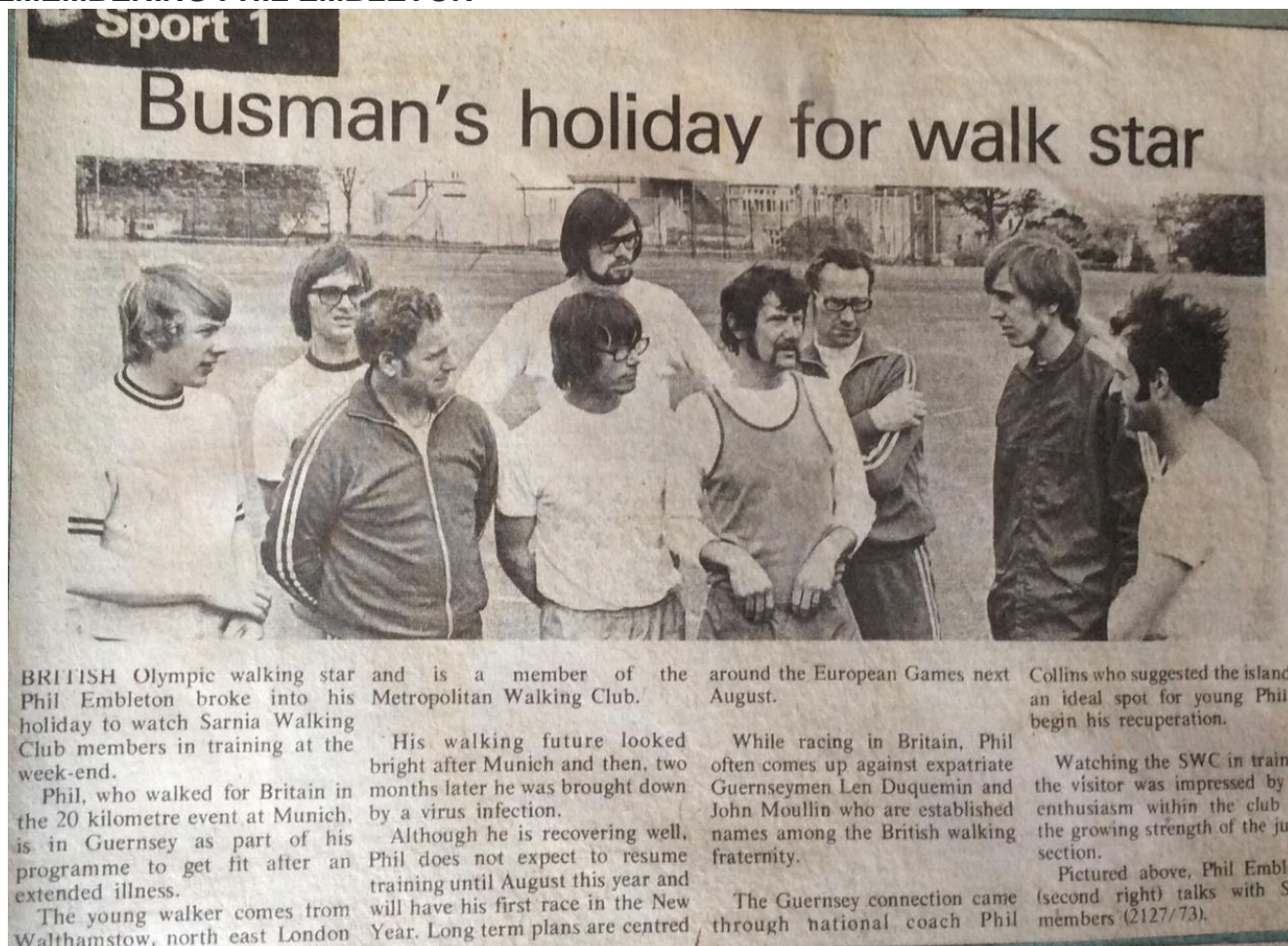
If spending more time indoors and maybe looking for some additional reading, then Lancashire Walking Club have a truly newsy website that'll engage your attention for a good hour - or more. This Club enjoyed a wonderful and extended heyday and, as well as mentioning those who were

active at the time, and this Club's many dedicated officials, there are mentions for race walkers from many other parts of the County. [Lancashire Walking Club : Health The First Wealth](#)

OPINION POLL

More than half asked don't want the 2021 Tokyo Olympics to be held at all in their Country. Of those who still approve, 31.1% of them want the Olympics only to go ahead in a reduced form.

REMEMBERING PHIL EMBLETON



Phil Embleton visiting Guernsey's Walkers in 1973. Press cutting kindly supplied by Rob Elliott.

PERMANENT REMINDER

Since the funeral of former Moulton 5 Miles' helper Tony Challis an obituary was published in a local publication. A paragraph referred to Tony's work on a well-known Cambridge City Centre landmark, known as "**Reality Checkpoint**", in an open space known as "**Parker's Piece**". When the Centurions 2018 Social Walk was held around this historic City, our excellent locally-based tour guide Sue Clements led us across this large common. When Michael Portillo's "Great Railway Journeys" visited Cambridge, cameras went to Parker's Piece and captured Reality Checkpoint. On 20 November 1863 the first football match was played under properly constituted rules, known as "*The 1863 Cambridge Rules*" which were drawn up by students meeting at Parker's Piece and adopted by the Football Association. Details of Tony's involvement are in the magazine extract below.



By Rich257 at the English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16325404>

Magazine Extract: Tony was the youngest son of Ted and Cis Challis and brother to Donald. From the age of three he grew up in Foxton and attended the local Foxton School. At the age of 14, rather than join his Father and Brother at the Foxton paper mill, he instead went to the Cambridge Technical College and from there became an apprentice with Listers & Sons Engineering. His trade was as a Blacksmith and during his apprenticeship, he helped to repair the scroll work on top of the lamp post on **Parker's Piece** in Cambridge known as **Reality Checkpoint**, which had been damaged during the celebrations on VE Day. It still remains in the centre of the park and apart from minor maintenance remains in working order to this day.

Writes Sue Clements: "A fascinating insight into Tony's life. I had no idea he had worked on Reality Checkpoint. If I ever lead another walk round Cambridge for race walkers I will include this interesting snippet."

DOUG HOPKINS RIP

Popular Chatham-based **Doug Hopkins** was Centurion No 347, qualifying when aged 23 in the colours of London Vidarians at the 1963 Brighton-to-London-and-Back clocking 22:24.10. Yes, you read it correctly - there were many races over a return journey (London & Brighton) but 1963 was the only year where this journey was reversed - starting and finishing in Brighton. Doug was one of 6 London Vidarians to qualify that day - 6 from one Club was then a record (since beaten). Those worthy 6 were, in finishing order: R W Hyland, D B Hopkins, A J Clarke, D J Hill, C T Mason and A Parsons. Doug raced for London Vidarians and then Medway AC, which in 2001 was part of a merger which saw Medway & Maidstone AC appear on our scene. Doug put much back into our sport after he'd hung up his racing shoes, by qualifying as both a coach and Judge. He accepted many appointments and frequently officiated in Essex. He'd only recently stepped down from judging, having announced in Essex Walker that he'd do so on reaching his 80th birthday. He was a loyal supporter of Kent County AA fixtures for decades. We're so sorry to say farewell to Doug and express our condolences to his wife Beryl and other family members. **DA**

DOUG HOPKINS C347 – CLUB MAN (by Chris Hobbs)



A young Doug burns up Battersea Park cinder track in 1965, in the colours of London Vidarians.

Photo kindly supplied by fellow Vidarian Brian Keegan.

Douglas Brian Hopkins was born on 14 August 1939 in Gillingham, Kent. Not the best time to be born but he and his family moved to Sheerness and survived the Second World War. Later the family moved back to the Medway Towns and Doug got an apprenticeship in Chatham Dockyard. He would relate that being a plumber's apprentice in H M Dockyard involved "some BIG pipes". He became a tough, fit, sporty young man. He and a friend knew of an ex-Olympian walker and tried that discipline as part of athletics. Doug was a sprinter at the time. There he met Ron Pantling a local man who was a well-known long distance walker. Ron invited Doug to join London Vidarians AC, a London club in the late 1950's, and Doug soon became one of their leading young walkers.

Part of his apprenticeship involved study at The Medway Technical College where he met his future wife, Beryl, at a Christmas dance. He swept her off her feet and, ever the romantic, took her to see him walk. Standing on the side of the road with occasional glimpses of her Romeo she was never introduced to anyone but would be "... rewarded with a cup of tea and a bun afterwards". But Beryl did witness one of Doug's greatest achievements when at the age of 23 became one of the youngest Centurions by walking the 100 miles from Brighton to London and back in 22 hours 24 minutes 10 seconds for The Vids. Suitably recovered they married the following year.

He joined the new Rochester Athletics club and then Medway AC with Ron Pantling and others based in the Medway Towns. Not only was Doug a competent athlete he was also a club committee man, organiser and coach. Those whom he guided in their early days as athletes included Cameron Corbishley, Gordon Beattie, Rod Parkins, Chris Hobbs, Colin Bradley, Di Pegg (Bullard), Tim Hayes, Rebecca Collins and Steve Holiday. What this mixed bunch have in common other than resilience and determination is not clear but all considered Doug to be a special friend, such was the nature of this honest, straight talking man. Doug was also incredibly witty and intelligent at his peak and this endeared him to those he met.

In the 70's he won the Kent 3000m walk championships in Crystal Palace and the 20 miles Championship in the Kent Countryside a few weeks later. Then he was posted to Gibraltar Dockyard for a couple of years. He had a whale of a time and became Gibraltar 3000m champion. He joked that there would have been no room for a 20 miles race on the rock. During that time he would send letters of advice and encouragement back to his junior athletes in Kent.

Despite his natural strength he was frequently injured and would judge when no racing. One proud moment was when he was Chief Judge to Carol Tyson's world best for 3000m walk in Drachten, Holland in 1976. "My hand shook when I had to sign the record form, I can tell you," he admitted later.

Race walkers living in Kent had the benefit of proximity to the continent and Doug frequently raced in France, Holland and Belgium and was occasionally County Team manager in the annual Magog Trophy.

He organised local races including within Rochester Castle grounds on Boxing days, across the M2 Motorway bridge over The Medway and back (seriously) and in the North Downs. His many years on the committees of his club were significant and appreciated.

He struggled with his health in the last 10 or so years. He found traveling and officiating stressful and retired from formal involvement at the end of last year. He did not, of course, lose interest in his athletes and followed their progress closely.

In 1993 he attempted to complete 100 miles in 24 hours, 30 years after Brighton. This time it was many laps of Battersea Park. Medway had a team and if we all finished we had a good chance of an elusive National Team Medal. We trained hard for it with several all-night walks but the conditions for the race in London were very tough and Doug called it a day around midnight. He finally stopped with more than 50 miles to go, sat down, had a cup of tea, checked his blisters then mumbled, "Right, where's Gordon?" and stood up and assisted Gordon Beattie to 5th place in his attempt to get close to 200km in 24 hours.

That was Doug Hopkins the perfect club athlete and friend.

Chris Hobbs

Other **memories and tributes to Doug Hopkins** include:

- "I recall Doug well from our annual Boxing Day walks around Rochester Castle." **Ron Prendergast**
- "I remember Doug from our meetings over the years as we always had a few words whenever we met up." **John Eddershaw**
- "So sorry to hear the sad news of Doug, many good races and holidays (Jersey for the 7 along the coast for three years) and Nijmegen." **Gerry Grosse**
- "RIP Very sad news. I knew Doug fairly well and this is a great loss to his family and to walking." **Steve Uttley**
- "Oh so sorry to hear such sad news. He was a great bloke." **Kathy Crilley**
- "I have known Doug for well over 50 years when I joined Medway AC. I was a runner then. He always had time to talk to you and was quite a character. RIP Doug." **Malcolm Martin**
- "Sorry to hear about Doug Hopkins. Such a nice bloke. The Grim Reaper is gradually coming for all of us." **Mick Barnbrook**

- “Doug was one of Race Walking's unsung heroes. He quietly and with much good cheer, did so much for Race Walking as both competitor and official.” **Oliver T Flynn**
- “Lovely photograph of Doug Hopkins, a great Clubman and RWA Judge too. May he Rest in Peace.” **Bill and Kath Sutherland**
- “The sad death of one of our esteemed Centurions. He was a great competitor and I knew him well as a member of London Vidarians WC. He was a great coach and motivator and his passing is very sad. I know all will be thinking of his family and send their condolences.” **Chris Flint**
- “Very sad news - a great guy, unassuming, always willing to officiate and give advice to novices. RIP Doug.” **Bob Dobson**
- “I do remember Doug Hopkins RIP, a nice walker from the old Vids. He was a good and fair judge in later years.” **Ray Middleton**
- “So sorry to hear this. Hope his wife is ok as she has Cancer as well. RIP. Will be sorely missed.” **Margaret Archer**
- “I remember Doug from my Race Walking days back in 1981. He coached me to a Kent selection and English Schools. Derek Garrard has been a lifelong friend and tells of how Doug got him into athletics. Sad news”. **John Foster**

DAVID ANTHONY VALENTINE BROWNING RIP

Sadly former RAF Champion race walker **Dave Browning** has passed on aged 85. Dave resided for many years at Dereham - for a while in the same road as much respected Centurion Kevin Marshall. Dave's wife Felicity predeceased him in 2017. Like many Royal Air Force race walkers at the time, he joined Trowbridge & District AC. He easily beat 60 minutes for 7 miles and is a former Norfolk 2 Miles' Champion. Dave appeared in RAF v Metropolitan Police matches and in the Ryan Cup (British Police v Civil Service v Combined Services). He once won a "Combined Services Medal" which was presented to the first serviceman finishing the Metropolitan Police 7 Miles at Imber Court in the '60s and '70s. After long service he was discharged from the Royal Air Force at RAF Brampton as a Flight Lieutenant. In the early '50s Dave served with Centurion Ken Roost at Khartoum as part of a team testing how aircraft parts performed in extremely hot weather, and served with him again at RAF Coltishall in the late '60s. Dave leaves a Lincolnshire-based daughter Kathy and her family. Condolence is expressed. DA

- “Sad to hear this news. I followed in his footsteps for the walks highlighted and the RAF Athletics Association. My times were not as good though.” **Richard Cole** (*Hon Treasurer, The Centurions*)

INFORMATION

Essex Walker, like all publications, appreciates information supplied by readers - which we're only too happy to publish. However lately we've been sent a few items of incorrect info. Can we request **all** information suppliers *double-check* their input - **before sending it**. In RAF slang there's "*pukka gen*" and "*duff gen*" and the latter isn't wanted! A long time ago an Essex Walker contributor sent so much inaccurate news it always needed triple-checking from different sources before publication, which was time consuming. That contributor, a "*character*", was known as "*Mr Duff Gen*" at one of many former Clubs - however he dramatically vanished from our scene and has "gone-to-ground" since. Usually news stories are published in good faith, as sent (ie without checking). But recently some news stories have needed scrutiny. A notification was that popular Southern visitors, Peter & Marion Fawkes, were approaching their 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary. Well, in a way, it's correct - but not until **2022**. When brought to their attention it prompted a nice response: *"In fact our Golden Wedding Anniversary is not until 9 September as we married in 1972. Still, thanks for keeping us in mind after all of these years. 1970 was the year we got engaged."*

Hon Ed first met them at a Vauxhall Motors Spectacular 10K (an occasion covered by Anglia Television). Here's what they recall of that event: *"We remember the Vauxhall races well and I hope the attached photos remind you also. We still have the gifts! I remember setting off at a ridiculous pace and led until Mick Greasley caught me near the end. Still, 2nd to Mick was no*

mean feat in those days. I'm not sure if you know but Marion is now President of Yorkshire Race Walking Club and we still involve ourselves in races up north. Also, with us leaving the EU soon, Marion remains the only Brit to have won the EU title and will now remain so. We trust you are keeping well and who knows, we may meet up again sometime once this horrible Covid 19 is contained and we can get back to some kind of normality." **Peter and Marion Fawkes**

Adds Hon Ed: Recently a number of readers voiced appreciation about our nostalgia articles. So let's recall the annual **Vauxhall Motors Spectacular 10K**, which was held from their large Sports & Social Club in Park Street, Luton. Vauxhall were once big in Luton (times change) and their annual "Spectacular Day" was open to all employees and families. Around 25,000 would show up for a variety of events. There was always a guest star - and below you'll see a picture of "Carry-On" regular Jack Douglas, best known as *Alf Lippitimus*, whose muscular antics and continual shouts of "*Phwaay*" amused audiences. Over the years other stars topping this Luton bill included Wendy Craig, Dianna Dors, Reg Varney and Ann George. *Who?* Ann was a well-known name in the '70s as *Amy Turtle*, Crossroads Motel's cleaning lady! This character lives on in "Acorn Antiques" as *Mrs Overall*, acted by fellow Brummie Julie Waters.

Another star was our commentator for all grass track events (cycling, running and on which our race walk started/finished). *Who remembers grass track racing?* He was Tony Read, one with a remarkable professional football career. As a goalkeeper he was transferred from Peterborough United to Luton Town, only to find he couldn't get a first team place - so in season '65/66 played as a forward and scored 12 times (including a hat trick against Notts County) from 20 appearances. He became the 1st team goalkeeper and was Luton's regular custodian for the next 6 seasons before a 1972 retirement. Much went on that track, including appearances by Vauxhall employee Tony Simmons (1976 Olympics 10,000 metres 4th).

Heavily sponsored races offered rewards more valuable than what passed for prizes at most race walking promotions. It gave all race walkers "*a big time experience*" as action commenced with 4 laps of the track before heading out for a few circuits around this site's perimeter roads, before wheeling back into the sports ground to finish with a lap of the track. In the mid-80s Vauxhall began winding down Luton operations (car production has long since ceased) and when their 'Spectacular Day' ended, the 10K walk was kept going by using another much talked about course - this being a up a long steep hill (it also featured on a now defunct Vauxhall Motors Open 7 Miles) and then through the grounds of Luton Hoo Estate, with its landscaped grounds laid out by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, before heading back towards a Luton finish line.

A good field assembled each year as high value scratch and handicap prizes were for the taking. Much of this success was due to Organiser John Telford and his helpers. Amicable Scotsman John, also well known locally as a talented table tennis player, was a member of a then strong Highgate Harriers club. Indeed other HH race walkers worked for Vauxhall Motors, including double Olympian George Coleman, his daughter Christine and the Dick brothers.

Our pictures show a double prize presentation to Peter and Marian Fawkes by personality Jack Douglas. "*Phwaay*"



GEOFF's MILESTONE

One of our Essex walking's scene's "leading lights" Geoff Hunwicks, is to celebrate a milestone **70th birthday** on 17 August. From early days, he was a talented athlete, who achieved Junior International status. He was prominent in a promising Ilford AC junior squad in the late 60s/early 70s (a picture of this Club's team from such times is in our June issue – No 395). Geoff also ran for Ilford AC and served for some years as their Hon Press Officer, during which time many eye-catching reports made the Ilford Recorder and a new defunct Ilford Pictorial. Geoff had many other sporting interests, as he was a good cyclist, could hold his own in Snooker Halls, excelled at table tennis, played pub skittles to a high standard and, along with the late Laurence Dordoy - made good in the ballroom (how many knew that?) - *you should see his fandango!* Geoff cared about the environment and stood in his Ward for the Council on this platform. He was an Essex County Champion - he won back-to-back Essex County 50K titles on an infamous Basildon course in 1976 and 77 clocking 5.01.23 and 4.47.25 respectively. In those days big names were in contention. Geoff unsuccessfully tried twice to become a Centurion, many years' apart. In 1973 a Bristol 100 miles attempt with cigars and tins of Heineken became the stuff of legend and is still talked about. In 1997 he tried his luck on a track at Ware, but it wasn't Geoff's day.

Geoff was a member of Ilford's star quartet which impressively won a National 10 Miles Team Championship for a first time in 1975 at Southwick in Sussex, on a 7 laps' course which wasn't as easy as it looked with 185 starting and 26 teams. Ilford's scorers were Roger Mills (3rd), Steve Gower (9th), Lew Mockett (16th) and Geoff Hunwicks (26th). Geoff was a team member when Ilford won the team title for a 2nd time, this time from 233 starters (yes 233) on an "out-and-back" course on that old motor racing circuit at Crystal Palace in 1978. That year favourites Sheffield UWC were nowhere to be seen at start time. The Referee held the start for 20 minutes - a long time to delay so many on a start line with no indication of an estimated time of arrival (no mobile phones then) - before authorising action. Sheffield arrived 5 minutes' later (having changed in their coach) after being held up in notorious London traffic. The Referee permitted them to start without fiddling with numbers and pins. But things still went against Sheffield as, despite being on an approved and measured course, it was found to be a mile short - so giving latecomers less distance to make up lost time. It had needed re-measuring shortly before the "off" as a large amount of mud was found on the circuit along one stretch. Ilford's scoring team were: Steve Gower (9th), George Nibre (12th), Geoff Hunwicks (22nd) and Brian Armstrong (27th). The team victory was even more impressive than in 1975, as both titles saw the winning team well ahead of 2nd placed teams (respectively Southend-on-Sea AC and Leicester WC). Both races saw Olly Flynn break the tape in 71.15 and 67.29 respectively. Olly's win wasn't straightforward as a protest was made by some "jobsworth" about his vest, which contained an eye-catching "Pepsi Cola" logo. Pepsi-Cola were prominent 1970s athletics' sponsors. Protests evaporated when revealed that the winner was given this vest by none other than legendary athletics administrative Arthur Gold himself! Some things never change - **Essex** were convincing Inter-County winners in both '75 & '78. A measuring wheel used was found to be faulty. RWA Hon. Championship Secretary Reg Wells made light of it saying, "It'll certainly frighten the life out of the East Germans when they see our 10 miles' times!"

One of Geoff's finest sporting moments came at Castletown (Isle of Man) in our RWA National 20 Miles' Championship when coming 9th (2:46.17) from 166 starters in a star-studded field. Afterwards leading RWA official - cantankerous Len Mitchell - singled out Geoff for praise. Experienced pundit Len said it was Geoff's finest race and praised his style and strength. He stated that this had been his breakthrough and much better success would come his way. He concluded, "*Geoff has everything*". After changing, Championship winner Bob Dobson (2:36.26) spent almost as long sat at a table autographing special "first day covers" that were produced to commemorate this great occasion on the Island. In Race Walking Record, Editor Alan Buchanan wrote, "This must surely have been the finest 'National' ever held. I could find nobody able to remember better". *Hear! Hear!* Geoff's progress continued - he came within seconds of securing a **full** international vest at a sudden death 50K selection race around Basildon Industrial Estate. On that occasion Barry Ingarfield was just ahead to claim the final coveted representative

selection place. To digress, has anybody recently heard from Barry? He used to be a regular communicator with many - but nobody's heard from Barry since before Christmas.

Geoff's professional life saw him move from Essex to Weymouth in Dorset, where he made a big impact on the West County race walking scene. He joined Weymouth St Paul's Harriers and, as well as being a most active competitor, also served that Club well as a holder of offices. The late Centurion Brian Copp of that Club said, "Geoff is an enigma. He trains as a snail's pace but come race days he goes as though the Devil is after him". Brian, who sadly passed away in 2015, had "a way with words" for as well as being a race walker, a he was a full-time sports reporter on the Dorset Echo.

Geoff then resettled in The Gambia with his wife Rohey, where they run Hart House Respite Care Home for Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties. Geoff remains committed to our Essex Walking scene and is one of our keenest readers. He keeps in touch with our activities and news via Race Walking Record and Essex Walker.

We salute Geoff on the occasion of his 70th birthday - having met him, he really is one you'll never forget! On behalf of all readers - a very happy Birthday to Geoff.

Ilford's 1975 National 10 Team Winners: l-to-r Geoff Hunwicks, Lew Mockett, Roger Mills and Steve Gower. Photo: Mike Street



SIGN OF SUCCESS

A number of our readers are now parkrun regulars, some having left race walking to be involved in these events. A feature of this scene is a "Club Atmosphere" which sees "milestone" occasions both recognised and rewarded. Part of this is an availability of special T-shirts marking achievements. Now so popular are parkruns that over 2,000 applications a week are being received for these garments - and an appeal on social media now asks runners to be patient as it's taking up to 4 weeks to dispatch these required items.



Dear Dave ...

APPRECIATION

- Another well put together and varied bulletin from you. I was wondering what you might have put in this one as I saw it in my email inbox, bearing in mind the lack of competition. However, I wasn't to be disappointed. **Len Ruddock**
- Great reading; and thanks for another excellent EW. **Alex Ross**

MEMORY LANE

I always regretted not making the Mexico Olympics through injury. My only claim to fame is that I was selected with Charlie Fogg and Ronnie Wallwork for altitude training in Font Romeu in the Pyrenees in preparation for Mexico (1968). All the athletes were regarded as Olympic probables. Sadly neither Charlie, Ronnie or myself made it. Perhaps in the next life!! **Roy Lodge**

LOOKING BACK - THEN THANKS!

I was 27 when first introduced to the sport when accidentally watching an athletics meet in Salford Birmingham that included a race walk featuring Ken Matthews, John Paddick and John Edgington just before they went to Japan in 1964. I was so interested in Ron's interview that I felt I must phone him and did so. We were able to remiss on so many of our encounters not least our time in Font Romeu as Olympic probables. I did actually tease him into thinking that had I been at my peak in 1966 I may have stayed with him at the 15 mile stage in Jamaica, as it happens I had to wait to the following year to beat all the medallists in the National 20 miles. One memory we shared was when a 50K race in Redditch coincided when I was selected to race in 20k in La Baulle. While I was away my wife Gina put up for the night Ron and Charlie Fogg in our home and it was our first wedding anniversary!! I am so grateful for our friendship and for the opportunity to keep in contact via the Essex Walker. **Roy Lodge**

Adds Hon Ed: That interview Roy refers to was one Ron Wallwork featured in on YouTube.

PICTURE IGNITES MEMORIES

Battersea Park - my favourite racing venue. Won GB v France 20 Kms there in 1969 when I had my photo on the back page of the Sunday Times Sports Section and an article 'Red faced selectors'. John Webb rightly gained his place in the European Games 20 Kms Walk in Athens finishing a creditable 8th. However I beat him by over 5 minutes at Battersea just prior to the Games on the August Bank holiday weekend clocking 91.10. Paul Nihill, the gold medallist said "Great Britain threw away a medal" as my time would have gained me the bronze. Straight after they came back I clocked 8 miles 565 yards in the hour on the track at Hendon Copthall Fields finishing 2nd to Paul - 8 miles 711 yards. All history now! In 1970 I won the AAA 10 Kms on the track at Battersea with Roger Mills second. No Style Prize was awarded on that day as the RWA said there was too few in the race. What on earth has that got to do with it as they had always previously awarded a Style Prize? All these incidents, and there were many, made me more determined to succeed in Edinburgh in 1970. Even my own Club Judge Eddie Staker of Highgate Harriers contributed when I was pulled when about to lead in the 1970 RWA National 10 Miles Walk at Liverpool on a rough piece of tarmac. If there is a will there is always a way!

Bill Sutherland

NOTIFICATION FROM CHRIS HOBBS

It's my sad but not quite unexpected duty to inform you that Doug Hopkins died. Doug died at home after suffering from cancer of the brain and other related causes. He was 81. He became a Centurion at a relatively young age, Gibraltar champion and several times Kent Champion. At

Medway Athletics Club, formally Rochester and latterly Medway & Maidstone AC he served as an initial coach to the most eclectic bunch of walkers as Cameron Corbishley, Gordon Beattie, Di Pegg (Bullard), Steve Holiday, Chris Hobbs, Tim Hayes, Rod Parkins and many others. Keep healthy.

Chris Hobbs

NOTIFICATION FROM CHRIS FLINT

I had a call from Linda Manning, the daughter of Ray Manning Centurion 415 (Wakefield Harriers) who qualified in the Leicester to Skegness 100 (19.56.20) in 1968, that he died on 3 July after a short illness, aged 88 years (not covid). His funeral was restricted to family. Condolence messages/cards to Linda Karalius, 81 Worcester Way, Wideopen, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE13 6JD. Linda says her father was a proud Centurion and his medal, certificate and plaque will be displayed at the funeral. Sorry for the sad news, especially so after losing Ann and Doug recently.

Chris Flint

ANNOUNCEMENT

Woodford Green with Essex Ladies AC have cancelled their Open Graded Meetings of 28 July and 25 August, so there goes the rest of the Woodford Tuesday Walks season, unfortunately! We hereby declare the final result to be a draw all round and hope that we can get going again next year.

Peter Cassidy and Pauline Wilson

EMAILS A MUCH-ADMIRER NAME FROM THE PAST

I have amazing memories competing in race walking events back in the early 70's. I'm still in touch with George Nibre and Bill Sutherland who are still very much involved with the sport. Great work pulling all of this together.

Jack Lord

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CONGRATULATIONS

Richard and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary during lockdown – with a great walk together, and an enjoyable take-away supper from a little cafe in our small market town.

Sandra Brown



- “Congratulations and happy 50th anniversary to Richard and Sandra” from Dr Kitty Hung (Metropolitan Police Walking Club).

Adds Hon Ed: Also celebrating their 50th are Essex couple Mike and Irene Bateman. Congratulations to all - and any others we may have missed.

BOB DOBSON RECALLS

Thanks for the memories. Last year I reminded Ron Wallwork that 2020 would be 50 years since the 1970 Commonwealth Games and we said that, with Shaun Lightman, we should try to get together for a celebratory drink/meal. Alas that opportunity didn't happen on 18 July 2020 but maybe we should have still raised a glass separately on that day. Yes that was my international debut and I was nervous and excited. Not wishing to be put off by the credentials of the opposition I deliberately did not research their past performances. That was probably my first mistake, not realising I was up against an Aussie (Noel Freeman) who had finished 2nd and 4th in 2 Olympics. I remember Shaun telling me "these international races start fast". And so I did, leading to a recall for a false start. When the gun did go, I must have gone like a bat out of hell judging by the lead I had going out of the stadium after 200 yards. Alas I paid the price of bad pace judgement, being just one second outside my PB for 10 miles at the half way turn. The rest is history as they say, and oh what might have been had I had some previous international experience. Our race was on the first day of athletics and I used the rest of my time in Edinburgh training around Holyrood Park and Arthur's Seat. I reckon that training put in good shape for the National 50 kms the following month, with a successful result.

Bob Dobson

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY ARTICLE RESPONSE

On Saturday 18 July, 2020 it was 50 years from the Commonwealth Games 1970 in Edinburgh. It seems unbelievable that it was so long ago. It was a really fast race throughout with times for me 37.21 - 5 miles; 37.29 - 10 miles (74.50) then 39.31 - 15 miles 1.54.21 and then 43.03 for the final 5 miles into strong head on gusting North Sea winds and rain with much of the roadway through Portobello on cobble stones. Time for 20 Kms was 93.49 really fast for a distance race, eh? I still can't believe how things turned out as England had 3 very good walkers lead by Ron Wallwork - 1966 Commonwealth Games Champion in Kingston, Jamaica. Also there was Noel Freeman, 1960 Olympic 20 Kms Walk Silver Medallist in Rome and Bob Gardiner, 5th in the 50 Kms Walk in the Olympics who had set a World Record for 20 Miles in the lead-up of 2.29 and Bachan Singh (India) who had done 90.40 for 20 Kms in 1969. Don't forget Len Duquemin (Guernsey) who finished 6th at age 42 and clocked the fastest last 5 miles on route. It was an unforgettable Major Championship Race Walk in so many ways with a multi-nation field of 21. In the Trial some 6 weeks earlier I was 9th in 2.47 and had to take 10 minutes off the time to gain my coveted Bronze Medal. I firmly believe if there is a will there is a way if you believe in yourself on the day that matters most. Take care and stay safe too.

Bill Sutherland

MAILS DOUBLE OLYMPIAN ERIC HALL

I am full of admiration of those who collected the material! I will reply, but in a shorter Epistle which I would be obliged if you could circulate to those who recall my interrupting their training over the last 70 plus years. Over those years I have met many walkers but I will miss a number of folk out as memory is not as clear as it once was, if it was ever very good. First of all my bookshelves hold almost all copies of the record up to 1973.

Sad to start with the news on the passing of Colin Young a man who never failed to remind me of an event we had met at years earlier! RIP Colin.

One prompt came from a Lancastrian who remembered my wife and I knowing Ron Wallwork. The reason was that I was due to be posted "Up North" which we felt would mean moving away from Belgrave Hall and walking. After applying for a number of posts without luck I was accepted for one in Manchester based in Piccadilly. Within a few days I bumped into Chris Bolton and Joe Lambert. I was told of a race the following weekend in Eccles and so I was signed up – 2nd claim member only. A few weeks later the venue was Preston. At the next race Ron appeared. I was invited to Bolton to train and life was to include race walking again. My wife was welcomed and we settled down in Heald Green. About 3 years later I was posted to Leicester so walking venues changed but we have been friends with Joan and Ron ever since. Not just as walkers but

unplanned visits around the world. I have always been interested in coincidences. We can list the Thetford Forest, Alaska, New Zealand and Norway are good examples. The last included participation in the North Cape 2 k walk. Result not recorded. My final recollection is an invitation about Ron after a training session of 20 miles in the Peak District Ron asked if I would be interested in helping out if he could find a person to walk 1,000 miles. By 2009 Ron found his man so Glyn Jones, Jon May, Ron and Amos Seddon are the people if anyone asks you how to train for a long walk in Lancashire – or anywhere else!

Eric Hall

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